

DEC 01 2006

Application No.: 10/804,823

Docket No.: JCLA13060-R

REMARKS**Present Status of the Application**

The Office Action rejected pending claims 1-4 and 7-16 and objected to claims 17-18. Specifically, claims 1-2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shimada et al. (US 4,161,645), and claims 3-4 & 7-16 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimada et al. in view of JP 2003-019561. Claims 17 and 18 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but Examiner stated that they would be allowable if written in independent form.

In response thereto, Applicants have amended independent claims 1-2 by adding the features of claims 17 and 18, amended method claims 3 and 4 by reciting claims 1 and 2 respectively, canceled claims 17-18 and submitted the following remarks. In addition, the feature previously added into claims 3 and 4 is moved to new claims 19 and 20, and claims 7-10 are further amended accordingly. Reconsideration of claims 1-4 and 7-16 and consideration of claims 19 and 20 is respectfully requested.

The advantages of incorporating/using the nozzle designs described in claims 17 and 18 have been specifically described in the Arguments to last Office Action. It is noted that Examiner stated that claims 17-18 would be allowable if written in independent form, so that amended independent claims 1 and 2 including respective features of claims 17 and 18 should be allowable.

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Meanwhile, for the method of amended independent claim 3/4 uses the TIG welding equipment of amended claim 1/2 to include the feature of claim 17/18 and thereby have the advantages as described in the Arguments to last Office Action, amended claims 3 and 4 and claims 7-16 & 19-20 dependent therefrom should also be allowable.

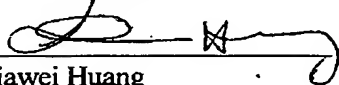
CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that claims 1-4, 7-16 and 19-20 are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,
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